



***Embassy of the United States of America  
Madrid, Spain***

**Security Message for U.S. Citizens: Worldwide Caution  
March 6, 2017**

As part of the Department of State's continuous efforts to provide U.S. citizens traveling abroad with information about safety and security events, we are updating the Worldwide Caution with information on the continuing threat of terrorist actions, political violence, and criminal activity against U.S. citizens and interests abroad. This replaces the Worldwide Caution dated September 9, 2016.

As terrorist attacks, political upheaval, and violence often take place without any warning, U.S. citizens are strongly encouraged to maintain a high level of vigilance and take appropriate steps to increase their security awareness when traveling. To better prepare for possible emergencies, U.S. citizens are encouraged to read Country Specific Information pages, Travel Warnings, and Travel Alerts on [travel.state.gov](http://travel.state.gov) before planning a trip.

Travelers are urged to enroll in the [Smart Traveler Enrollment Program](#) (STEP) to receive security messages and make it easier to locate you in an emergency. The Department uses these security messages to convey information about terrorist threats, security incidents, planned demonstrations, natural disasters, etc. In an emergency, please contact the nearest U.S. Embassy or Consulate or call the following numbers: 1-888-407-4747 (toll-free in the United States and Canada) or 1-202-501-4444 from other countries.

U.S. government facilities worldwide remain at a heightened state of alert. These facilities may temporarily close or periodically suspend public services to assess their security posture. In those instances, U.S. embassies and consulates will make every effort to provide emergency services to U.S. citizens. U.S. citizens abroad are urged to monitor the local news and maintain contact with the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate.

Terrorist groups including ISIS, al-Qa'ida, their associates, and those inspired by such organizations, are intent on attacking U.S. citizens wherever they are. Extremists may use conventional or non-conventional weapons to target U.S. government and private interests. Terrorists are increasingly using less sophisticated methods of attack to more effectively target crowds, including the use of edged weapons, pistols, and vehicles as weapons. Extremists increasingly aim to assault "soft" targets, such as:

- high-profile public events (sporting contests, political rallies, demonstrations, holiday events, celebratory gatherings, etc.)
- hotels, clubs, and restaurants
- places of worship
- schools
- parks
- shopping malls and markets
- tourism infrastructure
- public transportation systems
- airports

In multiple regions, terrorists, guerrilla groups, and criminals seek to kidnap U.S. citizens to finance their operations or for political purposes. In the wake of well-publicized attacks against commercial aircraft in Egypt by ISIS and Somalia by al-Shabaab, the Department remains concerned that terrorists could again seek to down aircraft using concealed explosives or hijack commercial flights

Private U.S. citizens should not travel to any country to participate in armed conflict. U.S. citizens are reminded that fighting on behalf of or providing other forms of support to designated terrorist organizations can constitute the provision of material support for terrorism, which is a serious crime that can result in penalties, including prison time and large fines.

In addition to concerns stemming from terrorism, travelers should be alert to the possibility of political unrest, violence, demonstrations, and criminal activities when traveling. Country-specific information pages and Travel Warnings should be consulted to obtain the latest data on such threats.

Below, we provide information specific to different regions and countries. Please consult [travel.state.gov](https://travel.state.gov) for additional information.

**AFRICA**: An array of terrorists, guerilla, and insurgent groups are active across Sub-Saharan Africa, and the threat of al-Qa'ida and ISIS-inspired attacks constitutes a growing concern. U.S. citizens remain at risk from car bombings to complex assaults on hotels and tourist sites. In Somalia, terrorists frequently target hotels and the commercial aviation sector has been attacked. Additionally, a number of the aforementioned groups continue to target Americans traveling and working in the region for kidnap-for-ransom operations. Travel Warnings are in effect for the following countries:

[Burkina Faso Travel Warning](#)  
[Burundi Travel Warning](#)  
[Cameroon Travel Warning](#)  
[Central African Republic Travel Warning](#)  
[Chad Travel Warning](#)  
[Democratic Republic of the Congo Travel Warning](#)  
[Eritrea Travel Warning](#)  
[Ethiopia Travel Warning](#)

[Kenya Travel Warning](#)  
[Mali Travel Warning](#)  
[Mauritania Travel Warning](#)  
[Niger Travel Warning](#)  
[Nigeria Travel Warning](#)  
[Somalia Travel Warning](#)  
[Republic of South Sudan Travel Warning](#)  
[Sudan Travel Warning](#)

**EAST ASIA and PACIFIC:** Armed terrorist and criminal groups are operating in the East Asian and Pacific region and may attempt to target U.S. citizens, particularly for kidnapping in the coastal areas and outlying islands of the eastern part of the Malaysian state of Sabah, and the southern Philippines. Indonesia has witnessed an increase in terrorist-related arrests and foiled plots, and several small-scale attacks or attempted attacks have occurred. Periodic acts of violence in Thailand remain a concern. U.S. citizens are urged to avoid all travel to North Korea/the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) due to the serious risk of arrest and long-term detention under North Korea's system of law enforcement. Travel Warnings are in effect for the following countries:

[North Korea Travel Warning](#)  
[Philippines Travel Warning](#)

**EUROPE:** Terrorist groups continue to plot attacks in Europe as foreign fighters return home from Syria and Iraq, while other individuals may be radicalized or inspired by ISIS propaganda. European authorities continue to warn of additional attacks on major events, tourist sites, restaurants, commercial centers, places of worship, and the transportation sector, frequently prompting heightened security at notable public venues and coordinated counterterrorism operations. Travel Warnings are in effect for the following countries:

[Turkey Travel Warning](#)  
[Ukraine Travel Warning](#)

**MIDDLE EAST and NORTH AFRICA:** Terrorist groups are very active in the Middle East and North Africa. The U.S. government remains highly concerned about possible attacks against U.S. citizens, facilities, businesses, and perceived U.S. and Western interests in the region. Iraq, Syria, Yemen, and Libya are considered violent and unpredictable war zones, and there is no official U.S. diplomatic presence in the latter three countries. U.S. citizens should avoid these areas. Terrorist groups have demonstrated capability to conduct attacks throughout the region, posing both a direct and indirect threat to U.S. citizens. Government officials throughout the region are concerned about the potential return of foreign fighters following ISIS's territorial losses in Iraq, Syria, and Libya. Travel Warnings are in effect for the following countries:

[Algeria Travel Warning](#)  
[Egypt Travel Warning](#)

[Iran Travel Warning](#)  
[Iraq Travel Warning](#)  
[Israel, The West Bank and Gaza Travel Warning](#)  
[Jordan Travel Warning](#)  
[Lebanon Travel Warning](#)  
[Libya Travel Warning](#)  
[Saudi Arabia Travel Warning](#)  
[Syria Travel Warning](#)  
[Tunisia Travel Warning](#)  
[Yemen Travel Warning](#)

**SOUTH and CENTRAL ASIA:** The U.S. government assesses terrorist groups in South Asia may be planning attacks in the region, possibly against U.S. facilities, citizens, and interests. U.S. citizens should avoid travel to Afghanistan, as no region in the country is immune from violence. A number of established terrorist organizations, indigenous sectarian groups, and other militants pose a danger to U.S. citizens in Pakistan. Extremist elements are also active in India, as outlined in a recent emergency message. Terrorists have hit a wide variety of targets and institutions in Bangladesh. Travel Warnings are in effect for the following countries:

[Afghanistan Travel Warning](#)  
[Bangladesh Travel Warning](#)  
[Pakistan Travel Warning](#)

**WESTERN HEMISPHERE:** Insurgent groups, armed criminal gangs, and terrorists remain active in Latin America, the Caribbean, and Canada. U.S. citizens are particularly vulnerable to kidnap-for-ransom attempts and violent crimes of opportunity while visiting a variety of countries. Gang- and narcotics-related violence is of concern in several countries throughout the region. Travel Warnings are in effect for the following countries:

[Colombia Travel Warning](#)  
[El Salvador Travel Warning](#)  
[Haiti Travel Warning](#)  
[Honduras Travel Warning](#)  
[Mexico Travel Warning](#)  
[Venezuela Travel Warning](#)

For further information:

- See the [Department of State's travel website](#) for the [Worldwide Caution](#), [Travel Warnings](#), [Travel Alerts](#), and [Country Specific Information](#).
- Follow us on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#).
- The Department of State's Overseas Security Advisory Council (OSAC) provides several resources to enhance the safety and security of the U.S. private sector abroad. Additional information on OSAC can be found on [OSAC.gov](#) or by following OSAC on [Twitter](#).

- Mariners and U.S. citizens considering maritime travel should also review information at the websites of the [National Geospatial Agency](#), the [Maritime Security Communications with Industry Portal](#), and the [U.S. Coast Guard](#) for information related to [maritime](#) and [port security](#) globally.